Black Carbon cloud over the country

3263. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that scientists have warned that Black Carbon cloud over the country rings alarm bells; and

if so, the steps Government has taken to end continued dependence on coal based power plants and growing vehicular pollution, which has pushed the country towards an inevitable climatic catastrophe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC) refers to the high loading of pollutants in the atmosphere consisting of mixture of anthropogenic sulphate, nitrate, organics, black carbon, dust and fly ash particles and natural aerosols such as sea salt and mineral dust.

The exact impacts of pollutant loading over monsoon rain and agriculture are still under study and the International program on Atmospheric Brown Cloud has been initiated by the world community to understand such impacts.

(b) Considering the fact that coal is to remain mainstay for generation of electricity in India in short to medium term perspective, new plants are being encouraged to adopt more efficient and clean coal technologies. Besides, 1,50,000 MW hydro initiative has been launched to achieve the objective of full hydro potential. Non Conventional Energy sources are also being encouraged and 11,125 M W out of total installed capacity of 1,43,061 M W in the country is contributed by renewables. Measures have also been taken to improve the air quality and reduce the pollutant loading *e.g.* introduction of tightened emission norms for vehicle, improvement in fuel quality in transport sector, use of cleaner fuels, introduction of electrostatic precipitators in thermal power plants, introduction of biogas plants and improved cookers in rural sector etc.

Tiger protection projects

3264. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

the reasons for drastic reduction of tiger population in India;

the total number of National Park where tiger protection projects are implemented;

the total budget and expenditure in these projects for last ten years; and

the action that has been taken against these officers concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The main reasons for tiger decline in areas outside tiger reserves/ protected areas, as seen in the findings of the recent, refined country level estimation, are as below:

(i) Degradation of forest status outside Protected Areas/Tiger Reserves owing to:

(a) human pressure

(b) livestock pressure